

191-193 Merrimack Street (House)
Manchester
Hillsborough County
New Hampshire

HABS No. NH-206

HABS
NH,
6-MANCH,
4-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

191-193 MERRIMACK STREET (HOUSE)

HABS No. NH-206

Location:

191-193 Merrimack Street, Manchester, Hillsborough
County, New Hampshire

USGS Manchester South Quadrangle, Universal Tranverse
Mercator Coordinates: Zone 19 Easting 273000 Northing
47625000

Present Owner:

Manchester Housing Authority
198 Hanover Street
Manchester, New Hampshire 03104

Present Use:

Vacant

Previous Owner
and Occupant:

Reverend Solomon Stith

Previous Use:

Church Hall (basement) and four residential apartments
(upper stories)

Date of Demolition:

Anticipated to be October 1, 1985.

Significance:

Originally built as a single-family house and subsequently enlarged to contain a storefront and four residential apartments (ca. 1890-1910), the Furber House preserves several architectural elements of its original Greek Revival style design as well as later Victorian and early twentieth-century alterations including an Italianate style entry hood, a basement storefront and a plain rear wing. In its scale, setting and current appearance, the building reflects the growth and development of the City of Manchester and the evolution of the city's central neighborhoods from areas of single-family houses to mixed uses by the early twentieth century.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Dates of erection: ca. 1845-1858; ca. 1876-1896. The house stands on Lot #496 which is identified in the Amoskeag Lot Book (Manchester Historical Association) as having been sold to L. Furber; no date is attached to this transaction; however, neighboring lots were sold in the later 1840s, suggesting that this lot was sold at the same time. Construction of the building's rear wing occurred between 1876 when a Bird's Eye View of Manchester does not show the rear wing and 1896 when the Miller Atlas of Manchester indicates the structure at its present dimensions.

2. Architect: unknown (if any)

3. Original and subsequent owners: The Amoskeag Lot Book which identifies the sale of lots during Manchester's initial industrial development names the first purchase of Lot #496 (191-193 Merrimack Street) as L. Furber. Between 1844 and 1860 city directories list no Furbers with the brief exception of the manager of one mill-owned boarding house elsewhere in the city. Subsequent atlases and directories provide no information about the ownership and occupants of the building until 1916 when the city's first street directory listed the occupants of the building as: 191-vacant; 193-Kajetonas Bucis, Juzef Grymowicz and Jerzy Znajdowski.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The builders of the building's historic features are unknown; recent alterations to the interior finishes and to the facade's cornice were carried out by Reverend Solomon Stith, the building's last owner, during the 1960s and 1970s.

5. Original plans and construction: Information about the building's original design is derived from city atlases and physical inspection of the present structure; original plans are unavailable.

It seems most likely that the building was originally a one and one-half storey Greek Revival style cottage with a gabled facade facing Merrimack Street (north). Atlases indicate that the house possessed an original kitchen ell which occupied the eastern two-thirds of the house's original south (rear) elevation. Based on other houses of the period in the surrounding neighborhood, it is likely that the house rested on a foundation of rock-faced granite and that its first floor stood only 2 or 3 feet above sidewalk level.

6. Alterations and additions: The Furber House has undergone several major periods of alteration and enlargement. The earliest of these alterations seems to have been the removal of a Greek Revival

style cornice at the main entry and its replacement with Italianate style brackets (ca. 1870-1890). Between 1876 and 1896, the two-storey rear wing was built; it is likely that the original roof of the main house was removed and a full second storey with a flat roof was constructed at this time. Based upon the different floor levels between the original structure and rear wing and upon the atlases which do not indicate a storefront until 1916, it is likely that the original structure was raised around 1916, its original foundation was removed and the present storefront and brick foundation were constructed. Subsequent alterations were made in the 1960s - 1970s when the facade's cornice was rebuilt with rectangular pieces of plywood the joints of which are covered by wooden battens. Interiors were modified by the installation of particle-board wood-grained panelling throughout much of the building.

B. Historical Context: The Furber House was originally constructed as a single family residence during Manchester's initial industrial development. Typical of privately built houses of the period, the building occupies a narrow rectangular lot in a neighborhood that contains a variety of single and double houses, now mostly converted to apartments. The building's subsequent conversion to rental apartments and the replacement of its original gabled roof with a full second storey and a flat roof are typical of the alterations made to many single-family houses near the city's center during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when multi-family housing became widespread.

PART II. ARCHHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Originally built as a Greek Revival style cottage, the house has been altered during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by the construction of a rear wing, full second storey with a flat roof and a basement commercial space. Of the alterations made to the building, only the added hood at the main entry has a clearly identifiable style (Italianate) while all other elements are of utilitarian design.

2. Condition of fabric: The building is in poor condition due to many years of poor maintenance and some vandalism that has occurred within the last year. Specifically, clapboards on the main house (north section of the building) suffer from dry rot; window sash on the east elevation has been broken; and on the interior previously damaged plaster that has loosened from its lath is concealed by modern particle-board panelling.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building has a bar-shaped floor plan composed of the original main house (22' x 31.25'), its rear ell (15.5' x 18.75') and an added rear wing (25' x 31.25').

2. Foundations: The building rests on a low brick foundation that dates from alterations and additions made during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is likely that the original foundation possessed granite facings.

3. Walls: Elevation of the main house and its original ell (north sections of the building) are covered with wooden clapboards. Windows are set in undecorated frames composed of flat boards. Both ends of the facade have pilasters with sunken central panels and moulded caps. Extending across the head of the facade is a boxed cornice with a frieze composed of plywood and wooden battens; the cornice framing appears to date from ca. 1876-1896 although all of its exterior facings date from the 1960s - 1970s.

Elevations of the added rear wing and the enclosed porch along the west elevation of the rear ell are covered with asphalt shingles. At each corner the added rear wing is trimmed with undecorated corner boards; the wing's south elevation has a projecting boxed cornice with no mouldings.

4. Structural system and framing: All sections of the building are of balloon-frame construction. Most of the structure remains concealed beneath room finishes and is not accessible for measurement.

5. Porches, sloops, balconies: Following renovations of ca. 1916, the main entry (north elevation) was equipped with a high wooden stoop which has been removed.

An enclosed two-storey porch exists on the west side of the original rear ell and the north side of the added rear wing. Elevations of this porch have been enclosed during the twentieth century by balloon-frame walls and windows. Original porch railings and other details have been removed.

6. Chimneys: The building has three chimneys, all of which were built to vent stoves. All chimneys are built of brick and rise unornamented above the roof. One chimney exists near the north end of the main house serving the northwest room; a second chimney exists near the center of original rear ell; and a third chimney exists near the core of the added rear wing.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The building has four principal entries; these are:
- 1) The original main entry at the easternmost bay of the north elevation is a four-panel door flanked by side lights, each of which originally possessed five panes (now reduced to two). Above the door is a seven-pane transom. The doorway is set in a shallow vestibule framed by original pilasters which rose to a cornice that has been removed and replaced by a flat hood supported by two Italianate style brackets.
 - 2) A storefront entry exists at the basement of the western two bays of the north elevation. This entry contains a contemporary door with small-pane lights.
 - 3) A rear entry to all apartments exists on the west elevation of the enclosed rear porch. This entry contains a contemporary flush-panel door. Within the porch are four entries, one for each apartment. Each of these entries contains a single door composed of two recessed panels surmounted by four-pane lights (damaged).
- b. Windows: All windows at all elevations are set in undecorated frames consisting of unmoulded flat boards. Original 6/6 sash remains at the first storey of the main house, while second storey windows are a mixture of some original six-pane upper sashes and two-pane lower sashes (6/2). The rear wing contains 6/2 sash throughout.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape & covering: All sections of the building are enclosed by flat roofs that are covered with tar and gravel.
- b. Cornice & eaves: The roofline of the main house and original ell are trimmed with projecting boxed cornices that have been re-faced with modern materials. These boxed cornices are not moulded. The rear wing has a projecting boxed cornice on its south elevation only; side elevations are trimmed with single boards that are flush to the plane of the wall below.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: The basement is partially above grade level at the building's north end and totally above grade at the south end. Its interior consists of a large rectangular commercial space (converted to a church hall) beneath the original main house; a former lavatory, kitchen and storage areas beneath the original rear ell; and an unfinished open space in the rear wing.
- b. First storey: The northern half of the first storey which comprises the original house, contains a three-bedroom apartment laid out around an internal corridor that connects a living room (northwest room) with the kitchen. The southern half of the building possesses a four-room apartment consisting of a kitchen and living room (north) that open directly into two bedrooms (south).
- c. Second storey: The second storey floor plan is identical to the first storey.

2. Stairways: The building possesses three stairways; these are:

- a. The original main staircase rises in a single, straight flight near the northeast corner of the main house. Turned newel post, dowel balusters, moulded rail.
- b. A staircase rises from the basement to the second storey at the west elevation of the original rear ell; this staircase rises in two stages per storey. Its finishes have been removed with the exception of two turned newel posts that appear to date from the late nineteenth century.
- c. A rear staircase exists at the southwest corner of the rear wing where it rises in straight flights between the basement and the second story. Railings are solid and are covered with modern drywall.

3. Flooring: Throughout the building, flooring consists of linoleum and wall-to-wall carpeting. Original soft wood flooring is concealed by modern materials.

4. Wall and ceiling finishes: Walls in most areas of the

building are covered with plaster that has loosened from its lath; nearly all walls have been covered with modern wood-grained particle-board panelling during the 1960s-1970s. Ceilings are mixed between original plaster and drywall that was installed (1960s-1970s) to replace damaged plaster. No ornamental finishes exist on ceiling or wall surfaces.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Door finishes vary by location. At the first storey of the original main house and rear ell five doorways retain four panel doors set in moulded frames with corner blocks. Elsewhere, throughout the building, doorcases are formed by flat boards with no decorative details. Panel configuration of doors varies, reflecting the use of salvage materials during the building's several periods of alteration. The majority of doors are four-or-five panel.
- b. Windows: With the exception of the first storey of the original main house, all windows have undecorated interior cases that are formed by flatboards. Windows at the first storey of the original main house are set moulded cases with decorated corner blocks.

6. Decorative features and trim: In addition to window and door trimmings described above, the house retains a baseboard with a moulded cap at the northwest room of the first storey. This same room also retains a wooden mantelpiece that originally consisted of undecorated pilasters, an undecorated frieze and a shelf; of these features, the frieze and the shelf have been removed.

7. Hardware: Door hardware throughout consists of unornamented hinges and round door knobs made both of wood and glass. Locks and hardware on exterior doors are contemporary.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house occupies nearly all of its narrow rectangular lot.

There is an asphalt paved path along the north end of the west elevation and a shallow well at the storefront on the north elevation.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

A. Original Architectural Drawings: None found in the collections of the Manchester Public Library and the Manchester Historic Association; building pre-dates the City of Manchester

Building Department.

B. Early Views: No individual view or streetscapes found in the collection of the Manchester Historic Association and Manchester Public Library; building shown as a poorly defined outline on the 1876 Bird's Eye View of Manchester.

C. Interviews: None conducted.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:
Amoskeag Lot Book (Manchester Historic Association).
2. Secondary and published sources:
Manchester City Directories , (1844-present).
Publisher varies.

Bird's Eye View of Manchester, N.H. . (Bailey & Hazen, 1876).

Atlases of Manchester, New Hampshire:

1870 (James A. Weston); 1896 (D.L. Miller & Co.),
1916 & 1954 (Sanborn Map Co.).

Map of Hillsborough County, New Hampshire , (Boston: Smith, Marian & Co., 1858).

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: Hillsborough County Deeds.

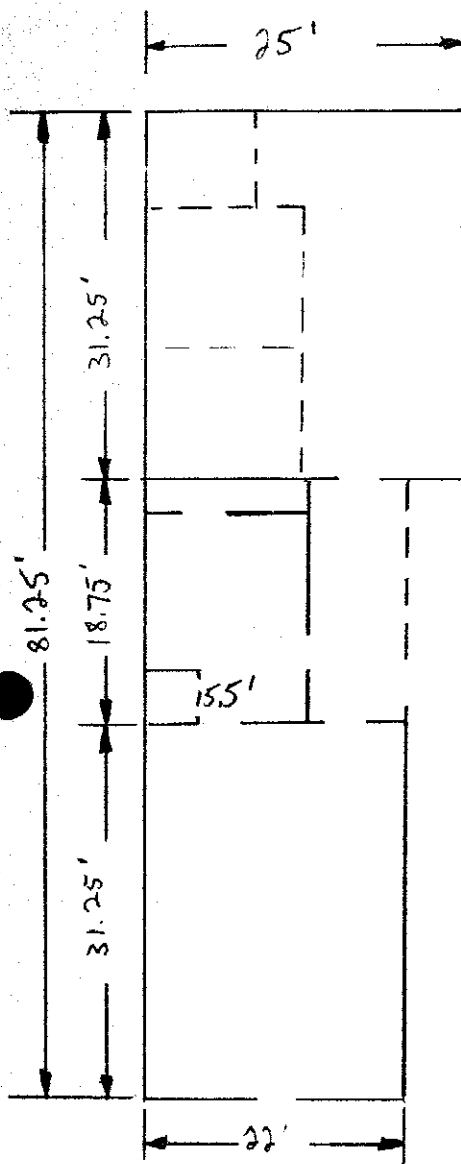
PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION :

The subject property was acquired as part of the Kalivas-Union Neighborhood Improvement Program. The program was an urban renewal project designed to encourage the rehabilitation of rental residential property and removal of structures infeasible of rehabilitation. Funding was provided by Community Development Block Grants and used for low interest loans, property acquisition and demolition, and streetscape improvements.

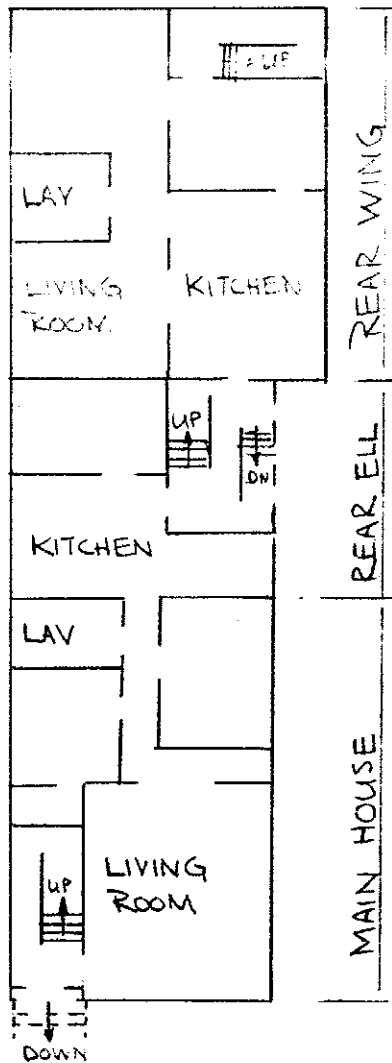
Prepared by: Brian Pfeiffer
Title/Affiliation: Consultant to Manchester Housing Authority

Date: August 1985

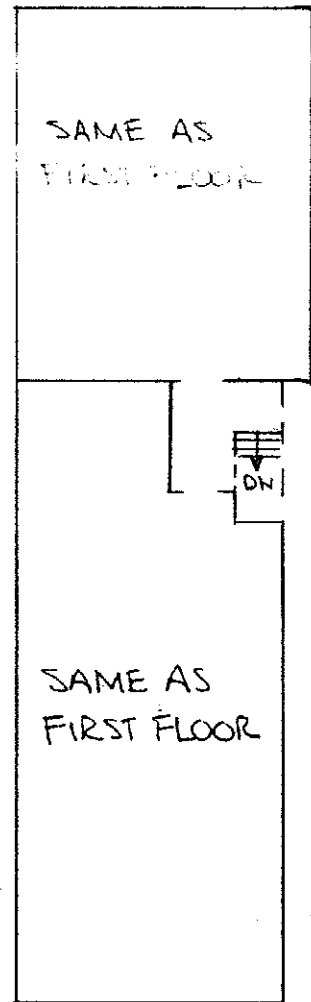
SKETCH PLAN
(Not to Scale)



BASEMENT



1st FLOOR



2nd FLOOR

